



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: September 30, 2015

TO: Wyatt Shields, City Manager

FROM: Stephanie Rogers, Transportation Engineering Supervisor *SR*

SUBJECT: South West Street Roadway Configuration Recommendation

South West Street is currently undergoing reconstruction and will need to be marked upon the installation of new pavement. Per the recently adopted Bicycle Master Plan, City policy is to solicit community feedback before installing bicycle facilities on public roadways. City staff received comments from the community and held a public meeting on September 15, 2015 to discuss options for improving the configuration of South West Street.

The responses were varied, but residents were generally most concerned about consistency, safety and maintaining on-street parking. Many feared that a short bike lane that ended abruptly at the City of Falls Church/Fairfax County line would cause confusion and put cyclists and motorists alike at risk, and the roadway is not wide enough near West Broad Street to accommodate a separate bicycle lane without removing parking. For these reasons, staff recommends that the roadway be marked with shared lane markings, or “sharrows.” Figure 1 shows the proposed cross section of South West Street from Ellison Street to Poplar Drive, where the roadway width is approximately 39 feet. This was presented as Option N-2 at the public meeting.

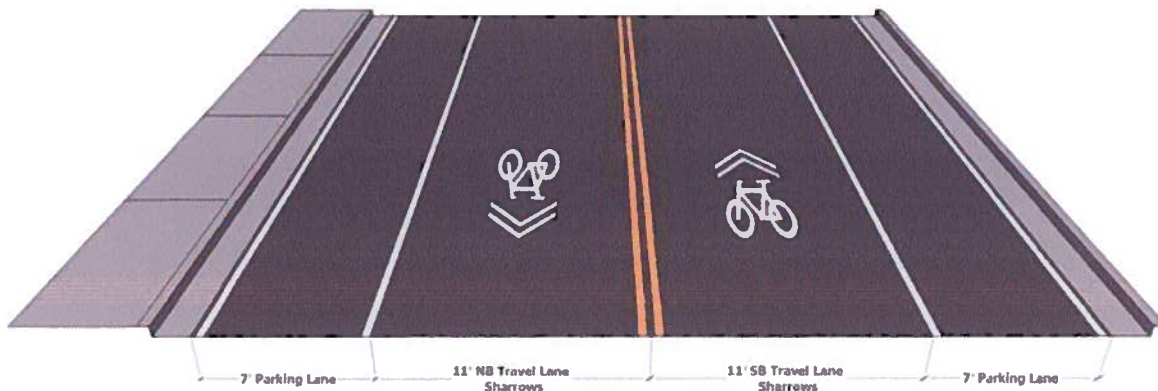


Figure 1. Recommended Marking – Ellison Street to Poplar Drive

Figure 2 shows the proposed cross section for South West Street between Poplar Drive and Abbott Lane, where the roadway is approximately 47 feet. The community did not support the addition of a painted median as shown in Option S-1 due to concerns about pedestrians using it as a refuge, so a new option was created to show the excess space allocated to an area between the curb and the parking lane. This additional space could be used for loading and unloading or pedestrian overflow, among other purposes.

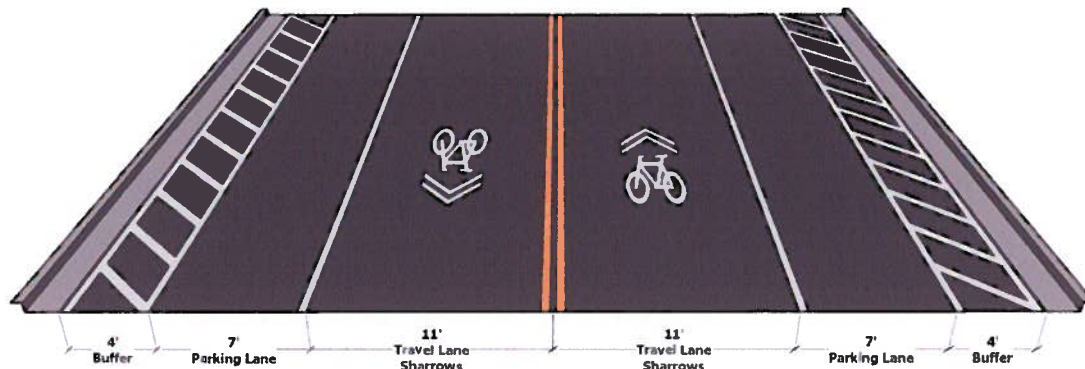


Figure 2. Recommended Marking – Poplar Drive to Abbott Lane

Other roadways in Falls Church such as Park Avenue and Maple Avenue have had sharrows installed to guide cyclists away from parked vehicles and remind motorists to share the road. An additional benefit of sharrows is that they do not require separate right-of-way for installation and can therefore be marked along the entire length of South West Street. This type of pavement marking could be continued along North West Street and West Street (within Fairfax County) very easily.

The community broadly supported the addition of marked crosswalks at the intersections of South West Street with Ellison Street, Parker Street and Poplar Drive. Staff recommends constructing the necessary curb ramps to accommodate these requests as well as installing high-visibility marking and “State Law: Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalks” bollards for the crossings. Staff also recommends removing outdated signage and adding new “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” signs and new wayfinding signage for cyclists in conjunction with the new pavement marking. All proposed changes to signage could occur after the reconstruction is complete, and the pavement marking could be installed 2-4 weeks after the end of construction if the pavement temperature is high enough to receive thermoplastic markings. If the pavement is too cold, the marking layout could be implemented in spring 2016. Temporary marking would be installed in the interim.

These improvements are recommended because they will narrow the travel lanes, thus slowing travel speeds, and facilitate safe usage of the roadway by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists while directly addressing the needs and concerns of the community we serve.